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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: PRESIDENT BUSH'S MIDDLE EAST VISIT; SAO
PAULO

"Weak Results"

Liberal, largest national circulation daily Folha de S. Paulo (1/16) editorialized: "President George W. Bush concludes today his eight-day visit to six Middle East nations with a poor balance regarding ambitious US projects for the region.... Bush is still trying to compensate for the effects of the invasion in Iraq in 2003... and he wants to promote a scenario of stability that does not lead to further oil price hikes.... The weakness of leaders [such as Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and Palestinian National authority's President Mahmoud Abbas] prevents their commitment to the concessions necessary to advancing the peace process. In Kuwait, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, Bush kept harping on the risks of Iran's aggressive regional strategy. But the presidential rhetoric was undermined by friendly fire: the recent report released by the US intelligence services on the suspension, in 2003, of the Iranian project to build a nuclear bomb. Actually, Bush has not even achieved much more modest goals such as preventing Iran's rapprochement with Egypt, a nation where he will conclude his Middle East visit today."
White